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**Maine Judicial Branch rescinds Phased Management Plan and issues new Post-Pandemic Orders**

**Portland, ME** — The Maine Supreme Judicial Court announced today that it has rescinded the Phased Management Plan, a five-phase process for reopening Maine courts in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The [Final Addendum](#) to the Plan released today states the following:

*The State of Maine Judicial Branch issued its COVID-19 Phased Management Plan on May 27, 2020, in response to the novel coronavirus pandemic that had engulfed the country and rendered normal judicial proceedings impossible. The Plan provided five sequential phases based upon the ability of the Judicial Branch to modify its procedures, resources, and facilities to operate at maximum levels while protecting the public and Judicial Branch personnel.*

*The Judicial Branch reached Phase Five, the final phase of the Plan, in late 2020 as COVID-19 infections began to increase at alarming rates. An Addendum was added to the Plan indicating that full implementation of Phase Five was to be held in abeyance indefinitely until conditions improved.*

*Containment procedures and the arrival of the COVID-19 vaccines have produced a marked reduction in the incidence of infections. The Centers for Disease Control have recommended reducing or eliminating many of the previously existing curtailment measures. The Governor has rescinded many of those measures to the point where the courts can move briskly toward a return to full operations.*

*Accordingly, the Phased Management Plan no longer serves any purpose under present conditions, and is hereby concluded, and all provisions therein are rescinded.*

Additionally, the Supreme Judicial Court announced the issuance of new Post-Pandemic Management Orders (PPMO). The new orders extend certain practices, processes, and procedures implemented during the pandemic including:

- Every litigant, lawyer, juror, law enforcement officer, or other member of the public who enters a Maine courthouse or another Judicial Branch facility will be required to wear mask face covering regardless of vaccination status or unless otherwise directed by the presiding judicial officer. (PPMO-SJC-1(A, B))
- Each presiding judicial officer has the discretion to conduct conferences, hearings, and trials remotely through video or telephonic formats, or in person. (PPMO-SJC-1 (D))
- Guidance for conducting and participating in remote proceedings is set forth in PPMO-SJC-2.
- The 14-day advance filing requirement for criminal complaints and limits on the number of persons assigned a specific arraignment date are continued. (PPMO-SJC-1(E))
- Oral arguments scheduled before the Supreme Judicial Court may be conducted in-person or remotely at





the discretion of the Court. (PPMO-SJC-1(F))  
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PPMO-SJC-1 also rescinds the following PMOs:

- PMO-SJC-1 (compendium of multiple provisions);
- PMO-SJC-2(B) (electronic filing of criminal motions);
- PMO-SJC-5 (quarantine procedures);
- PMO-SJC-7 (remote proceedings and public access);
- PMO-SJC-9 (screening questions upon entry to a court facility);
- PMO-SJC-10 (procedures for hearing child protection cases); and
- PMO-SJC-11 (extending continuing legal education deadlines).

Finally, PMO-SJC-6(C) (which sets forth the process for the remote proceeding pilot project in FED cases) has been revised to include a process for requesting an alternative format.

All post-pandemic management orders and pandemic management orders of the Supreme Judicial Court and the Trial Court Chiefs may be found at this site: <https://www.courts.maine.gov/covid19/index.html>.

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